



Randomized Controlled Study of Collaborative Parent-Teacher Consultation in Autism

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Background

- The National Research Council (2001) has called for more trained school personnel with child-specific consultation skills related to autism.
- Research that supports consultation as an intervention is lacking.
- To begin to address this problem, outcomes from a collaborative intervention planning framework developed specifically for children with autism called COMPASS (Collaborative Model for Promoting Competence and Success; Ruble & Dalrymple, 2002) was evaluated.

Objectives

- To evaluate the impact of COMPASS vs. “usual” educational program development practice
- To generate data of additional factors (school organization, teacher, parent, and child) that may account for variance in teacher, child, and family outcomes.

Table 1. Description of Teacher Characteristics

Years Teaching	Mean (SD)
In general	11 (SD=7.6)
Students with autism	7.7 (SD=7.6)
Demographics	
Urban	22
Rural	13

Table 2. Description of Child Characteristics

Gender	29 males (83%) 6 females (17%)
Mean Age	6 yr., 1 months
Race/Ethnicity	75% Caucasian 22% African American 3% Biracial
Parent Income	64% \$25,000 – \$50,000 36% \$51,000 – \$100,000

Methods

- Randomized controlled design.
- 17 teachers in control group and 18 teachers in the experimental condition (see Table 1).
- 35 children and parents (see Table 2).
- Experimental condition:
 - Half-day collaborative consultation with caregiver.
 - Three skills were prioritized and specific teaching plans were generated.
 - Following consultation, teachers received four 1.5 hour teacher-coaching sessions.
- An evaluator unaware of group assignment conducted post assessment (Table 3; Figure 1).

Table 3. Child Characteristics at End of School Year

	Mean (SD)
Differential Abilities Scale	Tscore=46.2 (24.1)
Oral and Written Language Scales	Score=46.2 (18.3)
Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (TR)	Score=64.0 (13.3)
Behavior Assessment System for Children-2 Externalizing Composite (TR)	Tscore=59.7 (7.6)
Childhood Autism Rating Scale	38.9 (9.3) (severe)

Figure 1. Example of GAS Scoring Sheet

Results

- Children in the treatment group (N=18) made significant progress on selected IEP objectives (F=16.86, p<.001; Figure 2).
- Progress on social and communication goals were significantly higher for experimental group (Table 5).
- Caregivers reported better social behaviors and less stress (Table 5).

Table 4. Correlation of GAS Change Scores and Teacher, Child, Parent Factors

	Control	Experimental
Teacher		
Years teaching students with autism	.16	-.23
Knowledge	.19	.05
Number of students with autism taught	.37	-.12
Child		
Language (OWLS)	.42	-.17
Adaptive (VABS)	.44	-.23
Cognitive (DAS)	.76***	-.24
Behavior (BASC-Ext. TR)	-.02	-.24
Autism symptoms (CARS)	-.15	-.10
Parent		
Parent-Teacher Alliance	-.12	-.09

Table 5. T-test Comparison Between Groups

	Control		Experimental		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
GAS Social Communication	48.3	10.9	58.2	11.8	-3.3**
Parent Report Social	43.0	11.7	59.0	7.3	-2.7*
Parent Stress	290	41.7	251.7	26.3	3.1**

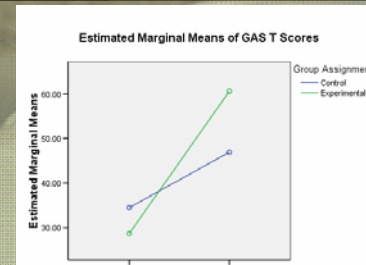


Figure 2. Two-way ANOVA for Time and Group Conditions